

# These Types of Christians Are at Great Risk of Renouncing Jesus

Are you in one of the groups of Christians who will be quick to renounce Jesus? You might be shocked.

Few can argue that we are experiencing a falling away right now. Many are surrendering wholehearted passion for Jesus for other more immediately satisfying, carnal pursuits. Our culture is growing darker by the day.

However, as great as the falling away is today, it cannot compare to what the Bible calls the apostasy, or the great falling away. This will be a far-reaching rebellion against God and an abandonment of truth.

“Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself as God” (2 Thess. 2:3-4).

The Bible makes it clear that legitimate followers of Jesus will, during a time of great pressure, fall away.

Then they will hand you over to be persecuted and will kill you. And you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. Then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will rise and will deceive many. Because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end

will come (Matt. 24:9-14).

I've often wondered just how easy it will be to renounce Jesus when the pressure intensifies in the end times. After all, it's easy for many to excuse apathy, carnality, prayerlessness and other dangerous spiritual lifestyle choices. The ferocity of Satan will be experienced at levels never before fathomed. I believe it will be the norm, not the exception, for Christians to embrace the beast.

He was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, so that no one may buy or sell, except he who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.

Here is a call for wisdom: Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast. It is the number of a man. His number is six hundred and sixty-six (Rev. 13:15-18).

## **Your End-Time Theology Doesn't Matter**

Well, actually, end-time theology matters a lot. To adopt a position that it's not important and that it will all just pan out in the end, as I hear so many preachers say, will put you and those you influence into serious eternal jeopardy. I firmly believe churches must regularly teach on eschatology and must facilitate a culture that keeps it at the forefront. The life of the church must be driven by the truth that Jesus is returning and that we must be prepared for our role during that key season.

What I meant by saying your end-time theology doesn't matter is that we will all have equal opportunity to reject Jesus—or

to go deeper with greater devotion into his love—regardless of when Jesus returns. While the events of the Tribulation, which I personally believe all Christians will experience, will make it extremely easy to reject God, we will all have the chance to fall into deception, rebellion, carelessness and a carnal lifestyle.

*A third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out in full strength into the cup of His anger. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. The smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever. They have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name (Rev. 14:9-11).*

While I believe we will have a clear, specific opportunity to either take a physical mark or reject it (which will seal our eternal fate), the truth remains that we can align with the beast now. We can befriend him and adopt his philosophies and his attributes, either overtly or subtly. For most, it's subtle. They remain convinced they are saved, secure and a follower of Jesus while living in great deception.

### **Groups That Will Easily Renounce Jesus When the Pressure Intensifies**

My wife and I attended a stage production that left my spirit troubled. It was a fictional presentation of events during the Tribulation. A family was living in a prison camp during the reign of the Antichrist, doing their best to survive day to day, wondering if they might ever escape, or would die at the hands of their enemies.

During one scene, a soldier offered to make a deal with the patriarch of the family. If he signed a decree renouncing

Jesus, they could all immediately go free. The soldier then left, giving them time to consider the offer. The father was at the end of himself. He wanted desperately to save his family, and every other attempt had failed. What happened next was grieving.

Sitting at the table with the document and a pen in front of him, he told his family he was going to sign it. He picked up the pen, but his daughter stopped him. She made it clear that it wasn't worth it to trade his soul for a few more weeks, months or years of life on the earth. Dying was better than eternal damnation. So far so good.

But then, the father, in an important teaching moment in the production said something to the effect of, "Daughter, this is just a piece of paper. It doesn't matter if I sign it or not. Nothing could ever affect the reality that Jesus lives in my heart and yours." That's where the grief hit me. Yes, signing the paper, taking the mark, abandoning truth, taking the easy way out absolutely does affect our eternities.

The Bible directly reveals that those who do so will drink the wine of God's wrath. (Revelation 14:10)

So, it's clear there are Christians who believe that their lifestyles and decisions won't impact their eternities. Here are some groups to consider:

### **Those Who Subscribe to Eternal Security**

It was obvious to me that the writer of the play that we watched was most probably part of one of the many mainline denominations that affirm the doctrine of eternal security.

I so appreciate what many of the godly men and women in these particular movements bring to the kingdom. However, this one belief can do deep damage to Christendom, leading millions astray. It will be extremely easy, just as we saw in the end-time production, to wrongly assume that our actions have no

impact on our eternal standing. The truth is that we are only safe if we conquer, overcome and endure to the end: "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments. I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (Rev. 3:5).

### **Those Who Affirm False-Grace Doctrine**

I've written on false-grace dangers often and won't add to it here, except to say that the number of people at risk of renouncing Jesus is rapidly increasing due to this movement. If all of our sins are forgiven, past, present and future, then taking the mark of the beast is a non-issue. In fact, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, sexual immorality, unforgiveness and any number of other sins won't impact our eternity if we believe in God's grace as taught by these teachers.

The deception is so dangerous as personal action and responsibility are removed entirely from the picture. The truth is that our actions absolutely do impact our eternity: "For if we willfully continue to sin after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27).

### **Those Who Aren't on Fire for Jesus**

A raging, burning passion for Jesus is non-negotiable. In fact, it's crazy that anyone would ever have to broach this topic. We are either on fire for Jesus or we are lukewarm, or possible cold and dead. Period. To endure the end times, we must have an anointing radiating out of us. We need to be so intimate with Jesus that our love of him could never be sacrificed for temporal relief. Those who refuse to take the mark of the beast will be radically in love and on fire for Jesus: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm,

and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16).

### **Those Who Don't Have a Lifestyle of Prayer**

A prayerless Christian is really a confounding concept. An oxymoron. Sadly, most Christians, it seems, are nearly prayerless. In fact, most churches are as well. We must be living, walking and praying in the Spirit, night and day if we hope to survive the coming pressure. You'll remember Jesus warning his disciples to stay awake and pray so they wouldn't fall into temptation. Do you know what temptation Jesus was referring to? Rejecting Jesus, as they did when the pressure increased and Jesus was taken away for crucifixion: “Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41).

### **Those Who Don't Live Holy Lives**

Christians who excuse away foul language, nudity and other immorality in movies, television and other media are setting themselves up for an eternity separated from Jesus. They are convinced that embracing certain sins won't have any impact in their lives on earth or their eternities; therefore, taking the mark will be an easy decision for them. Surely God doesn't really care about this the way some Christians might argue, right? Wrong.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov. 9:10).

### **Those Who Are Offended and Rebellious to Authority**

If you are easily offended, especially by those who are in authority, you are setting yourself up for a great fall. The Antichrist will be the authority you have been looking for, giving you what you want—for a time. It's critical to learn now how to love well, how to forgive and how to honor

authority that God puts in your life. If you think authorities in your life are unfair now, just wait until the end comes. Jesus will be giving leadership in a way that many will deem unfair. Will you have learned how to submit to unfair authority and how to trust God's leadership in your life? It's absolutely mandatory that you do. "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Rom. 13:1-2).

### **Those Who are Not Connected in a Local Church**

We will need each other more than ever as the pressure intensifies. The church will certainly look much different during the Tribulation than it does now, but one truth will remain—we will be together.

We must learn how to lock arms and contend together if we hope to survive in the end. The Bible gives us this instruction, especially as the Day draws near. "And let us consider how to spur one another to love and to good works. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but let us exhort one another, especially as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).

### **Final Thoughts**

There are other groups that are at risk of falling away. Many of them, in fact. There are some obvious ones I haven't addressed here such as seeker- sensitive churches and those who don't affirm the gifts of the Spirit. There are some that are not as obvious too. Those who have adopted pre-Trib rapture theology, preterists and others are at greater risk as well. But, don't let this become an argument about the timing of end-time events. This is about attitudes and decisions and belief systems that impact us at any point on the timeline.

We must be ready. Jesus is coming again soon. That is one

point we must simply have to agree on.